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PAPUA)

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Classified By: Daniel E. Turnbull, Acting Political Counselor. Reason:
1.4 (b, d)

[11](#). (C) Introduction and summary. This messages provides a survey of recent developments in Papuan politics. During a July 10 - 15 visit to Jayapura, poloff found the Papuan scene in a holding pattern. Barnabas "Bas" Suebu, the winner of the March 10 direct elections for governor, had still not been sworn in due to Papuan political infighting and central government dithering; on July 21, it was finally announced that Suebu would be sworn in on Tuesday, July 25 (See Part I below). Papuans are also awaiting President Yudhoyono's visit to the province on July 26 - 28, during which he is expected to announce a "New Deal" policy for Papua, which is already being circulated in the form of a draft Presidential Instruction (Inpres) (Part II). A senior Home Affairs Ministry official continues to preside as Acting Governor, and with the agreement of the provincial legislature, has signed off on a controversial and highly irregular budget (Part III). The Papuan Traditional Council (Dewan Adat Papua), an important umbrella organization of indigenous groups, held its fourth annual Congress in Jayapura on June 26 - July 1, but this seems to have generated little excitement (Part IV). Papuan church leaders have been angered by statements from senior central government officials to the effect that foreign and Papuan churches are fomenting separatism. (Part V) End summary.

I: Waiting For Pak Bas

[12](#). (SBU) The swearing-in of Bas Suebu and Alex Hesegem, who were elected on March 10 on the PDI-P ticket as the next governor and vice-governor of Papua, was blocked during June and July by maneuvers on the part of John Ibo, speaker of the Provincial Parliament (DPRP), and dithering on the part of the Home Affairs Ministry in Jakarta. Ibo was also a defeated candidate for the governorship, having headed the Golkar ticket.

[13](#). (SBU) According to the relevant electoral law, the swearing-in of the new governor takes place when the DPRP requests the Home Affairs Ministry to issue a letter from the President appointing the winning candidates as governor and vice governor. The way should have been clear for this step

on May 23, when the Supreme Court rejected the appeal of defeated candidate Lukas Enembe, who had alleged voting irregularities in remote regencies (reftel A). On June 6, Komarudin Watabun, Deputy Speaker of the DPRP, wrote the Home Affairs Ministry requesting that the President authorize Suebu's swearing-in. The following day, Speaker John Ibo wrote the Ministry to overrule Watabun's request, arguing that the DPRP was in the process of investigating charges that Suebu had falsified his secondary school diploma, and that Suebu should not be sworn in until this matter had been resolved. Home Affairs Minister Mohammad Ma'aruf responded to these contradictory requests by demanding that the DRPP leaders clarify the situation. This merely touched off another round of conflicting letters from Ibo, Suebu, and Watabun, who also traveled to Jakarta to lobby central government officials. In the meantime, the late June date originally envisioned for the inauguration came and went. Caretaker Governor Sodjuangon Situmorang, a senior Home Affairs bureaucrat, continued in office in Jayapura.

¶4. (C) There were indications during poloff's visit that the stalemate was near resolution. On July 11, Acting Governor Situmorang announced that he had formed an inauguration committee. On June 15, Watabun and Pastor Phil Erari, both members of the Suebu camp, told poloff that they had been reliably informed that Ibo's objections would soon be overruled by Home Affairs on the basis that the Supreme Court's May 23 ruling had confirmed Suebu's victory, and that the only question would be the actual date of the swearing-in. On July 17, Home Affairs Minister Ma'aruf publicly confirmed that President Yudhoyono had instructed him to resolve the matter before his July 28 visit to Papua. On July 21, the Governor's protocol office confirmed that Suebu would be sworn in on Tuesday, July 25. His counterpart in West Irian Jaya, Bram Atururi, will be sworn in on July 24, and both new governors will participate in the

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President's visit to Papua July 26 - 28..

¶5. (C) This bickering has, however, strengthened the central government's hold over Papuan affairs, which was already enhanced by the appointment of a civil servant caretaker governor following the sudden death of Governor Jaap Solossa last December. The Home Affairs Ministry could have intervened more decisively to resolve the swearing-in dispute early last month, as it had done in a similar case in North Sumatra province, and its failure to do so aroused suspicions that the central government was content to see Papua's democratic process bog down. By kicking the issue back to Papuan politicians, Home Affairs exacerbated and prolonged a situation that soured Papuans' first experience in direct election of their governor.

¶6. (C) Civil society leaders also worry that the feud between Ibo and Suebu will hamper the incoming governor's administration. The two men, both from the same village in the Sentani area near Jayapura, are longstanding rivals. Ibo is bitter over recent career setbacks, many observers note. Last year, he made a bid to head Papua's historically powerful Golkar network, but lost out when Vice President Kalla instead gave the nod to then-governor Solossa. After Solossa's death last December 19, Ibo was allowed to stand as the Golkar candidate for governor, but Kalla again undercut his position in the party by appointing Suebu - who was running as a member of the PDIP ticket - as a member of Golkar's advisory board, a move which seemed to be a crypto-endorsement. Contacts also accuse Ibo of abusing his control of the DPRP in the affair. The DPRP, they say, has no authority to investigate Suebu's educational credentials. This, they say, is a matter for the Provincial Election Commission or, if violations of the law appear to have taken place, the police.

¶7. (C) Despite this rocky start, many of our contacts

expressed guarded optimism about the incoming Governor based on his early outreach to NGOs and civil society. According to Septer Manufandu, director of a coalition of NGOs, Suebu had wanted to hold a round table with all international agencies and NGOs active in Papua in early July, but had to cancel this because of the dispute over his swearing-in. Pastor Phil Erari told us that Suebu is tentatively planning to co-host a conference August 4-5 which will include representatives of civil society, the DPRP, the Papua Traditional Council (Dewan Adat Papua, DAP), religious leaders, and representatives of the provincial government of West Irian Jaya province. The purpose of this conference, Erari said, will be to lay the foundation for "a new dialogue with Jakarta" about the future of Papua. Frederika Korain, Program Manager for the Catholic Diocese's Peace and Justice Secretariat, said that Suebu was making all the right noises,

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but she was concerned he would be stymied by the province's ineffective, corrupt, and change-resistant bureaucracy. (Incidentally, all contacts complained bitterly that the lack of legitimate political oversight since last year had aggravated the provincial bureaucracy's already over-developed propensities for unresponsiveness and absenteeism.)

II: SBY's "New Deal" For Papua

¶8. (SBU) President Yudhoyono plans to travel to Papua on July 27 - 28. The trip was originally slated for June, but was rescheduled because of the Jogjakarta earthquake. On the 27th, he will meet with Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Michael Somare. The two heads of government will inaugurate a new border checkpoint near Skouw Sae, just east of Jayapura. Yudhoyono will then proceed to Yahukimo regency, in Papua's mountainous interior, where he will officially dedicate 17 electrical power plants and, as he did during his trip last March to Merauke, will preside over a harvest celebration. This is to signify that the Yahukimo area has put last year's crop failure, which resulted in an outbreak of malnutrition, behind it.

¶9. (SBU) During the trip, Yudhoyono is expected to announce a "New Deal" to accelerate the development of Papua. This "New Deal" (the policy uses this English term) has already been widely circulated in the form of a draft Presidential Instruction (Inpres) that has been coordinated among Cabinet-level ministries, including Health, Agriculture, Social Welfare, Finance, Forestry and Commerce. The version of the Inpres that we have seen does not appear to contain

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new initiatives or new funding. Instead, it appears to systematize and accelerate existing programs by various ministries. It contains a host of sweeping but vague directives to individual ministries and agencies. For example, the Ministry for National Development Board is directed to "create a Grand Strategy for the Development of the Land of Papua in accordance with its respective cultural and ecological areas." It also explicitly endorses "Affirmative Action" (another English term) to promote representation of indigenous Papuans in government. Whether the "New Deal" succeeds in its stated goal of accelerating development in Papua depends entirely on whether the 29 central government bodies to which it is addressed follow through on a coordinated and sustained basis. One version of the draft mandates for creation of a senior working group to monitor implementation of the "New Deal."

¶10. (C) While we have not seen the Inpres in its final form, it has already been greeted with skepticism by some observers. One foreign Papua-watcher noted that it resembles a number of grand-sounding initiatives SBY announced for Aceh during his tenure as Coordinating Minister for Political and

Security Affairs under President Megawati. These plans were announced with great fanfare, but never amounted to much in the end.

¶11. (C) Agus Sumule, an academic based at the University of Papua in Manokwari, has already circulated a sharp critique of the New Deal, seeing it as just another made-in-Jakarta approach, devoid of input from Papuans. Sumule argues also that by failing to specify its relationship to the existing Special Autonomy Law, the New Deal is a tacit admission by the central government that Special Autonomy has failed. He notes also that the new policy ignores such longstanding grievances as human rights violations by the security forces. Certain specific points, such as an agenda item which seems to encourage transmigration as a way to develop agriculture in Papua, are premised on faulty Suharto-era assumptions and would replicate that regime's mistakes, according to Sumule.

III: Budget Brouhaha

¶12. (SBU) During the July trip, NGOs and civil society contacts expressed outrage at the findings of a recent study of the 4 trillion rupiah provincial budget passed last May. The study's authors were a group of respected academics who analyzed the budget at the request of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP), whose mandate includes oversight of the Special Autonomy law. 2.9 trillion rupiah of the 2006 budget derives from Special Autonomy funds, which are by law supposed to be used for the province's special development needs.

¶13. (SBU) The study confirms skeptics' worst suspicions. The researchers found that only 28.55 percent of the overall budget was broken down into detailed line-item expenditures; the rest consisted simply of lump sums allocated to various government agencies. This is a recipe for corruption and mismanagement. With regard to the Special Autonomy funds, the researchers found that almost half were being used to cover routine expenditures, such as administration and salaries, which should actually be paid by that portion of the province's revenue derived from central government allocations, taxes, and other incomes generated within the province.

¶14. (SBU) Only a small portion of the Special Autonomy funds, the researchers found, was being applied towards the purposes specified by law. For example, the Special Autonomy law specifies that 30 percent of the Special Autonomy funds should be used for education; the study found that only 12.2 percent was so allocated in the 2006 budget. Likewise, only 9.74 of 2006 Special Autonomy funds were applied towards health, whereas the law specifies that this should be 15 percent.

¶15. (C) Many contacts expressed consternation at irresponsibility of the acting governor, speaker of the provincial parliament, and the parliament itself. They noted that only 39 of the DPRP's 55 members attended the May 24 session that passed the budget. Certain specific expenditures attracted unfavorable notice as well, such as 525 million rupiah per month allocated for maintenance of the governor's official vehicle and 1.2 million in daily per diem for the governor.

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¶16. (C) Predictably, Acting Governor Situmorang was satisfied with the budget and in a July 11 meeting said he had had worked well with the DPRP to pass it. He said that he was particularly pleased with its focus on "poverty reduction," but admitted that the good uses to which the Special Autonomy funds are put have been badly publicized. As a case in point, he said that Special Autonomy monies had purchased eight new multi-purpose ferries that now connect Biak, Yapen,

and other islands to the Papuan mainland. He noted that the MRP had tried to insert itself illegally into the budget-making process, but had been rebuffed.

VI: Papuan Traditional Council Holds Fourth Congress

¶17. (SBU) The Papuan Traditional Council (Dewan Adat Papua, DAP), Papua's most important indigenous rights group, held its fourth annual Congress in Jayapura on June 26 - July 1. Delegations from seven regions attended. In its final statements, the DAP reaffirmed last year's "rejection" of Special Autonomy and its demand for a new dialogue between indigenous Papuans and the Indonesian central government, mediated by a third party such as the United Nations. The DAP welcomed the first direct elections for governor, but deplored the delay in inaugurating the winner. The DAP also rejected creation of West Irian Jaya Province as evidence of bad faith of the part of the central governments, and warned against any plans to further subdivide the province. The DAP called for an investigation into the 2006 provincial budget (see above), and called for the ongoing trial of those accused of involvement in the March 16 Abepura riots to reveal the truth about the underlying causes of the disturbance. The DAP noted that HIV/AIDS had reached the level of a humanitarian disaster in Papua, and affirmed its commitment to fighting the problem. Finally, the DAP deplored the deportation of Amcits Brian Keane and Casey Box (reftel B), who had been invited to attend the Congress. The DAP's statement said that the incident was proof that Papua was "a closed territory."

¶18. (C) The Congress seems to have aroused limited interest. The political positions it articulated are stale and predictable. The deputy speaker of the DPRP said the DAP only exists because of the central government's inconsistent implementation of Special Autonomy. Another civil society observer, Bambang Sugiono of the Center for the Study of Democracy, said that the DAP ignored some problems related to indigenous groups where it could conceivably make a positive difference. A case in point, he said, was the scandal surrounding former Jawijaya Regent David Hubi, whose corruption and incompetence resulted in a complete shutdown of public services for months on end last year. Despite this, Hubi enjoyed unwavering support from members of the Dani ethnic group. Members of his clan forced a violent confrontation with police when Hubi was finally arrested. The DAP, Sugiono said, could have used its network of tribal leaders to defuse this particular situation.

¶19. (C) Others were less critical of the Congress. Two workers in the HIV/ADS sector, interviewed separately, praised the DAP's initiative on the pandemic. Working through tribal leaders, they said, the DAP could spread information to elements of society in remote areas that were not receptive to other parts of the reproductive health network.

¶20. (C) The DAP remains an irritant to the authorities. Governor Situmorang was openly scornful of its agenda. Fadhal Alhamid, the organization's General Secretary, told poloff on July 14 that as in past years, the DAP had notified the police of its intention to hold the Congress; this was all it was obliged to do under the law. Despite this, the police informed the DAP after the fact that the event had been illegal because the police had not actively authorized it. Alhamid expressed surprise at this, noting that the Congress had been attended by provincial legislators, regents, and a few members of the national legislature.

V: Church Leaders Angry Over Separatist Taint

¶21. (SBU) Papuan church leaders we met with during the trip were angry and defensive over charges leveled by senior Indonesian officials in recent months to the effect that

churches, whether in Papua or overseas (Defense Minister Sudarsono and Ambassador to Australia Thayeb singled out Australia's Uniting Church), were promoting Papuan separatism. Other Indonesian leaders who have made this accusation in recent months are Hasyim Muzadi, chairman of the mass Muslim organization Nadlatul Ulama, and Lt. Gen. Muhammad Yasin, Chairman of the National Resilience Council. Papuan Protestants tend to believe that charges of separatist agitation by foreign churches taints them by association, since Papuan congregations have historically strong links to churches in the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere.

¶22. (C) The Reverend Herman Saud, outgoing head of Papua's Protestant Synod, said that while the Christian churches in Papua were obviously not separatist as institutions, they could not take responsibility for attitudes of a small number of their members. The separatist canard against Christians, Saud noted, was most often put forward by Muslim extremists, but Papuan Muslims tended to know better because of their first-hand experience with their Christian neighbors. It was nonetheless an inflammatory charge when made by senior government officials, Saud said, and Papuan religious leaders had requested a meeting with SBY during his upcoming visit to discuss the matter. Saud noted with some bitterness that the same officials linking Christians with separatism were quick to take offense when Muslims were unfairly associated with terrorism. Reverend Saud's successor as head of the Protestant Church, the Reverend Corinus Berotabui, charged that those officials were apparently unable to distinguish between Papuan separatism and Papuans demanding the rights they were entitled to as Indonesian citizens.

¶23. (C) Caretaker Governor Situmorang has clearly already had an earful on this issue, and backpedaled during a July 11 meeting. He claimed that Minister Sudarsono and Ambassador Thayeb had been "misunderstood" and that the Papuan churches had "overreacted." They had never meant to condemn the churches institutionally, he said, but rather were concerned about the agitation of a few "liberation theologians" involved in a separatist network.

PASCOE